SUBJECTS.

(1) The ryots should be allowed to plant trees on *poramboke* lands, as in other countries, under special conditions. (2) The ryots should be allowed to cultivate portions of proposed reserves and reclamations from backwaters. (3) The Irrigation Regulation should be brought into force in all the taluks and irrigation works such as canals, culverts &c., should be constructed under the guidance of the Tahsildar and the Director of Agriculture. (4) The Director of Agriculture should be given more powers and discretion in affording relief to the agricultural ryots. (5) Manure depots should be opened in all the taluks. An agricultural farm and a manure depot should be opened in the Kunnathur taluk and remedies suggested from time to time for the prevention of cocoanut palm disease. (6) The useless trees standing on the sides of public roads and causing inconvenience to the people should be allowed to be cut and removed by the people in case they agreed to plant cocoanut, jack, and other valuable trees instead. (7) The tanks used for irrigation purposes should not be registered in the names of private persons without the knowledge of the ryots owning lands in the *yela*.

Dewan's reply.—Noted.

55. The difficulties of Punja cultivation and some suggestions for remedying the same.

Mr. A. N. Krishna Pillai (Member, Kottayam taluk) said that *punja* cultivation, as compared with other cultivations, was far more expensive and yielded the least income. It was more expensive because it involved two new items, *viz.*, construction of bunds and the drainage. Some 20 years ago many unregistered lands were available in the vicinity from which the ryots found materials for their bunds without any cost. Now they had to procure them from long distances at enormous cost. The wages of labor had risen high and that had increased the cost of draining the *punja* fields to Rs. 8 per acre. Canals played a conspicuous part in *punja* cultivation. They were not only useful for irrigating the fields but for manuring them, as they also brought alluvial soil and deposited it on the fields, which was valuable as manure. Several of those canals had now died out of existence, having been registered away by the Revenue and Settlement Departments. The few that remained were useless for cultivation purposes.

Coming next to the suggestions, the Member said that the canals that existed should be improved. In Kottayam, the Arthutty canal was improved by the Government at a cost of Rs. 6,000, but it was now absolutely useless. For, without studying local conditions, a flood-gate was put across it. A portion of the gate had now been washed away to the Vembanad la'e. In the interests of agriculture he requested that the gate should be completely removed, for it not only prevented the manurial soil being deposited in the *punja* fields, but also obstructed the free passage of boats. He said that a memorial signed by the public of Kottayam asking for the removal of the flood-gate should have reached the Government. At a meeting convened by the Dewan Peishkar of Kottayam, the people expressed the unanimous opinion that the flood-gate should be removed.

Dewan.— The Chief Engineer says that, if the flood-gate be removed, water will rush into the canal under great pressure and it might cause the scouring of the sides.

LIBRARY ARCHIVES Kerala Legislative Assembly

SUBJECTS.

Member.—The widening and deepening of the canal is done in a rocky and laterite soil. No damage will therefore be done by the current. We wish the flood-gate to be taken away and water allowed to rush through.

Dewan.—Was not this canal once silted up ?

Member.—It was never silted up.

Dewan.—Without the flood-gate there would be difficulty in taking boats through.

Member.—The canal was in existence there from time immemorial. Boats can be taken along it without the flood-gate.

Dewan.—How do the other Members of the Kottayam and adjoining taluks feel in the matter ? Are you prepared to take the consequences that might follow the removal of the flood-gate ?

Mr. C. I. Chandy (Member, Trading Classes, Kottayam).—We do not want the flood-gate. It is doing more harm than good. Whatever may be the head of water, boatmen will take care and not venture their boats when there is a heavy monsoon. The soil being laterite, there was no possibility of its getting scoured by any current.

Messrs. P. M. Chacko (Member, Kottayam taluk), Parameswaren Pillai (Member, Ettumanur taluk), P. K. Narayana Pillai (Member, Meenachil taluk) and K. T. Thommen Mappila (Member, Meenachil, Nominated) also said that they were for the removal of the flood-gate.

Mr. A. N. Krishna Pillai continuing, said that there was another canal known as the Venchapalli canal, parallel to the Arthutty canal, which was blocked up now at the source. He requested that that canal might be cut open also.

The Member next suggested that experimental farms should be opened wherever there was large paddy cultivation and he asked for one such farm at Kottayam. He added that the ordinary bulls in the State were unable to draw the Meston plough introduced by the Director of Agriculture. With a view to the production of a better breed, each taluk should be provided with a seed-bull.

Mr. S. Parameswara Menon (Member, Ampalapuzha taluk) dwelt at length on the process and difficulties of *punja* cultivation and said that it differed from other kinds of cultivation of wet lands. Strong bunds were erected on the sides of the fields to prevent the inrush of brackish water from the rivers and canals. The grass and other materials required for the erection of those bunds were collected from the waste lands known as Thottappalli Kari. The place was also used as grazing ground for the cattle of the locality. The bulk of those waste lands had now been registered in the names of private persons. The Member understood that it was under contemplation to reserve about 500 acres as grazing grounds and to auction the remaining area of about 1,500 acres. That would

LIBRARY ARCHIVES Kerala Legislative Assembly

SUBJECTS

be very hard to the cultivators of *punja* lands in the taluk. The Member therefore requested that the remaining portion of the Thottappalli waste lands might be reserved for the grazing of cattle and for the supply of materials for the erection of bunds. He next said that, in the same way as the Thottappalli lock prevented the inrush of brackish water on the south, protection was necessary on the north. From Alleppey to Punnapra there were two or three small canals which should be blocked up by temporary bunds in the interests of cultivation. The other reliefs asked for by the Member were that remission of tax should be allowed when the crops failed on account of occasional drought or innundation and that an agricultural farm should be opened at Ampalapuzha to instruct the ryots in the improved methods of cultivation suited to *punja* lands.

Dewan's reply.—Noted.

56. Necessity for the appointment of a Committee for regulating the dates of opening and closing the Kodayar Reservoir.

Mr. K. M. Sivathanu Pillai (Member, Thovala taluk) said that the question of altering the date of opening the Kodayar Reservior was one that had been brought forward at the last Assembly; but the Government decided that they saw no proper grounds for changing the date. The Reservoir was now being opened about the 15th Edavam. The ryots began their cultivation in the beginning of Medam, and under the existing arrangements, even with so much water in the Reservoir looming before their eyes, water would not be let out before the monsoon burst. Though the Reservoir might be opened on the 15th Edavam, the ryots lower down the channel got the water only 15 days subsequently, *i. e.*, by the close of Edavam, so that the Kodayar water and the monsoon flood really came together. He therefore requested that the date of opening might be put back by at least fifteen days and water let out by the 1st Edavam. He added that the Government should experience no difficulty, as the Reservoir would get full again with the heavy rains in Edavam and Mithunam. He concluded by saying that the ryots would be satisfied with the relief prayed for and that he would not press for a committee.

Mr. T. Kumara Pillai (Member, Kalkulam taluk) observed that, though the question of altering the date of opening the Kodayar Reservoir was twice considered and decided by the Government, the fact that it was again being represented at the present session was clear proof that the ryots had a real grievance. He said that his object was not to press for an immediate change of the date. But, since the ryots of the four taluks of the division prejudicially affected by the existing arrangement believed that the Government were not aware of the real conditions of cultivation and the time when water was required in those taluks, he prayed that a careful enquiry might be caused to be made, either through a committee to be appointed for the purpose or through the Director of Agriculture, and if, after such investigation, it be found that the grievance was real, then the date of opening might be modified to suit the requirements.

He said that, in Nanjanad and Edanad, the cultivation began with the first rains, which would either be towards the close of Meenam or in the beginning of Medam. The ryots

LIBRARY ARCHIVES Kerala Legislative Assembly